



NEWS RELEASE

Matthew D. Orwig
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: August 2, 2006

Contact: Davilyn Brackin
Public Information Officer
(409) 839-2538 office
(409) 553-9881 cell

PROJECT SAFE CHILDHOOD WORKING GROUP FORMED

(Plano, TX) Matthew D. Orwig, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas, announced today the formation of the Eastern District of Texas Project Safe Childhood (PSC) Working Group. The Working Group's mission is designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Using a coordinated and integrated approach the PSC Working Group will prevent, investigate, and prosecute child exploitation offenses. The Eastern District Working Group is part of a national initiative by the United States Department of Justice.

The Working Group will draw on the resources and talents of local, state, and federal law enforcement, and community partners including the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), North Texas Crime Commission, victim service providers, school administrators, SROs, parent groups, and medical service providers. To carry out its mission, the PSC Working Group will:

- *Integrate federal, state, and local law enforcement efforts to provide a coordinated effort in investigating and prosecuting child exploitation cases, and in identifying and rescuing victims.

*Provide local execution of leads from national operations and programs initiated by NCMEC, the FBI, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and others, and coordinated by the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section.

*Provide increased federal involvement in child pornography and enticement cases to obtain stiffer penalties for offenders.

*Substantially increase the number of officers and prosecutors who are properly trained to investigate and prosecute computer-facilitated crimes against children.

*Coordinate national public awareness and education programs to raise national awareness about the threat of online sexual predators and child pornographers and to provide tools and information for parents and children seeking to use the Internet responsibly or to report possible violations.

U.S. Attorney Orwig expressed his appreciation for the commitment of the PSC partners, "It has been estimated that there are 50,000 predators prowling the Internet at any given time looking for children. In the Eastern District of Texas, we have seen a steady increase in the number of child pornography cases and in the depravity of the images depicting the sexual exploitation of children. Even infants are not safe from such sadistic exploitation. The PSC Working Group will better protect our children from the perils present on the Internet. It will help law enforcement and community leaders develop a coordinated strategy to more effectively investigate, prosecute, and punish these offenders and to educate the public about the dangers posed by the Internet."

The first meeting of the PSC Working Group was held today in McKinney. Collin County District Attorney John Roach expressed his office's commitment to the Working Group and in prosecuting child exploitation

offenses. Guest speaker Jennifer Lee, Program Manager, Child Victim Identification Project, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children spoke about the resources that are available to law enforcement in identifying exploited children and offenders.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Terri L. Hagan is coordinating the efforts of the PSC Working Group.

###